



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Education and Culture

Lifelong Learning: Education and Training policies

Multilingualism policy

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Follow-up of the Action Plan on language learning and linguistic diversity National Report Template

Country **Czech Republic**

INTRODUCTION

The Action Plan for language learning and linguistic diversity invited Member States to take actions on various issues. This document lists these points for action. It follows the same order as the chapters of the Action Plan: *1.Lifelong language learning; 2.Better language teaching; 3.Building a language-friendly environment.* Chapter four invites you to outline the global national strategy on languages and, if Member States so wish, to provide information on other language initiatives which do not fit into the framework of the Action Plan and/or plans for multilingualism.

Some actions recommended by the more recent Communication on Multilingualism are also included in the relevant chapters. They are shadowed in grey and are optional. Although the time allowed for these actions is shorter, Member States have the possibility to report on their initial work on them.

The national report should be written by filling in this template. Each point is followed by some key questions which guide Member States in presenting their work in progress. It is not compulsory to answer each point. If some of them were not a priority at national level it should be mentioned and the point(s) skipped.

Once completed, the national report should be posted on CIRCA: http://forum.europa.eu.int/Members/irc/eac/languages/library?l=/actionsplans20042006/follow-up_national&vm=detailed&sb=Title

For more information, please post a message on the CIRCA language newsgroup (http://forum.europa.eu.int/Members/irc/eac/languages/newsgroups?n=europa.eac.languages.bulletin_board) or contact Patrizia Baralli or Luca Tomasi (see contact details at the end of the document).

1. LIFE-LONG LANGUAGE LEARNING

1.1. 'Mother tongue plus two other languages': making an early start

It is a priority for Member States to ensure that language learning in kindergarten and primary school is effective, for it is here that key attitudes towards other languages and cultures are formed, and the foundations for later language learning are laid. The European Council in Barcelona called for "further action ... to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age.

In implementing this commitment, most Member States will be called upon to make significant additional investments. In implementing their commitment to teach at least two foreign languages from a very early

Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11. Office: MAD0 08/21. Telephone: direct line (32-2) 2994633. Fax: (32-2) 2996321.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture
E-mail: patrizia.baralli@ec.europa.eu

age, Member States should consider whether adjustments are necessary to primary school curricula, and whether provision for the training and deployment of additional specialist teaching staff and other teaching and learning resources in primary and pre-primary schools is adequate.

Member States are invited to review their current arrangements for early language learning in the light of best practice from across Europe; and

implement the Conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency concerning Content and Language Integrated Learning, including raising awareness of the benefits of this approach, exchanging information and scientific evidence on good CLIL practice and specific CLIL training for teachers.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Since 2004 the following three major documents, in which the role, organisation and content of language education are dealt with, have been produced.

1. **On 1st January 2005, a new Education Act (No. 561/2004) on Pre-primary, Primary, Lower and Upper-secondary and Tertiary Professional Education came into force. It sets principles and aims of education, including language education.**
2. **On 21 December 2005 The National Plan for Foreign Language Education (NP) was approved by the Government (No. 1660/2005).**
3. **The Framework Educational Programme (FEP) for “basic” (i.e. compulsory nine-year) education has been developed and piloted. Its gradual implementation (starting with the first grades of the two stages within compulsory education) will start in the school year 2006/ 2007. FEP requires that two foreign languages are taught within compulsory (primary and lower-secondary) nine-year education. Teaching of the first one has to start in the third grade; teaching of the second foreign language has to start in the eighth grade at the latest. The target level for the first foreign language for “basic” school leavers, i.e. before the pupils proceed to upper-secondary types of schools, is A2, for the second foreign language the target level is A1 (based on the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages-CEFR).**
4. **The Decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) on granting permission to schools to teach certain subjects in a foreign language**

Early language learning: pre-primary and primary education

On the basis of interest, and very often under pressure of parents, the number of pre-primary school establishments (usually for children between 3-6 years of age) offering teaching of foreign languages has increased. The level and intensity of teaching languages in these schools varies. These schools (mateřské školy) are either private or within the jurisdiction of communities (which are the organising bodies and bodies responsible for the school operation). The Ministry - being aware of the importance of quality early language learning which positively shapes attitudes of children to languages and assists in forming solid foundations for life-long language education - has included support (also financial) for language education in pre-primary establishments into The National Plan (NP), which, in the chapter focusing on pre-primary sector, asks for concrete activities to encourage mainly

- **pre-service and in-service training of teachers of pre-primary establishments;**
- **development of tools and resources suitable for this age category;**

- *improvement of information system offering public, especially parents, appropriate information on the advantages and inherent characteristics of early language learning. Early Language Learning in pre-primary establishments is to be understood as a way of sensibilizing children to language learning and providing them with an opportunity to learn about different cultures, different ways of expressing themselves, and motivating them to language learning.*

The NP aims to introduce foreign language teaching in the final year of pre-primary education, i.e. one year before children enter compulsory education. Teaching shall be carried out by specially trained kindergarten teachers by means of specially developed resource materials. Language learning at this level is not intended to be compulsory and will depend on the availability of qualified teachers.

The NP's Action Plan of activities considers English as the main target language in terms of material development and teacher training. If the foreign language is English, continuity when proceeding to primary school can be guaranteed, i.e. English could be taught right from the first grade of primary school. If kindergartens wish to introduce a foreign language other than English, the continuity could be maintained provided the relevant primary schools can (i.e. if qualified teachers are available) introduce a non-obligatory subject of that particular foreign language.

In order to guarantee the quality of early language teaching the NP has taken measures (at the moment applications for grants are being processed) enabling submission of projects which would

- *promote multiculturalism and languages of minorities;*
- *include early language awareness and early language didactics into the curricula of schools and higher education institutions preparing pre-primary school/kindergarten teachers and teachers of primary school;*
- *include language awareness and language- across- curriculum approach into the Framework Educational Programme for pre-primary and primary education;*
- *include English language didactics into the pre-service training programmes at universities preparing teachers of primary schools; similarly introduce in-service teacher training focused on linguistic didactics for pre-primary and primary school teachers ;*
- *grant the development of materials supporting other languages, especially languages of the same linguistic group, such as the Slovak language.*

In accord with the objectives and tasks defined in the National Plans the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education has started to work on the project “English for pre-primary education” with the aim to include early language learning methodology into the pre service training of kindergarten teachers. The final product should be interactive language games and computer based exercises.

Ministry has also bound itself to support, in terms of allocated number of lessons in the framework curricula, English as the first compulsory language taught as a follow-up of the English language teaching at pre-primary level.

The FEP for primary and lower-secondary (“basic”) schools requires, within primary level of compulsory education, one foreign language to be introduced. According to the FEP, teaching has to start in the third grade of nine-year school attendance. However, if conditions allow, it could start even earlier- in the first or second grades. Although the choice of languages is wide, it is recommended to prefer English as the first foreign language in order to guarantee continuity in terms of transfer from lower-secondary level to various types of upper-secondary schools. The National Plan approved in December 2005 increased the minimum number of hours provided by the Framework Educational Programme by three, i.e. to twelve hours within primary level. This means that during five grades of primary school a pupil can have e.g. two lessons a week during the first, second and third grades and three lessons a week during the fourth and fifth grades (pattern 2-2-2-3-3). Other patterns are possible as well. The number may be further increased by the head teacher who can use additional hours available in accordance with the facilities accessible and staffing available. Thus, foreign language teaching can start as early as in the first grade. Nevertheless, it has to start in the third grade at the latest.

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

Lack of qualified teachers, lack of experience in early language learning methodology, lack of resources. The National Plan tries to deal with this, but its Action Plan has only begun to be implemented. Also higher education institutions, being independent institutions, have not been very flexible in their response to the demand for more pre-primary and primary school teachers, and so far they have not yet fully reflected the National Plan requirements in their programmes and syllabi for teacher training courses.

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

The National Plan is accompanied by the Action Plan for the years 2005-2008. The Action plan specifies responsibilities, deadlines and action ways including financing (grants, programmes, ESF and other resources). It has been approved by the Government, and financial resources have already been allocated to its fulfilment. Some projects are expected to be co-financed using the ESF. There are different deadlines scheduled until the end of 2008 for the implementation of different measures. Some programmes and projects initiated within the NP are expected to have long- term and lasting effects going far beyond 2008.

Within the objectives of The National Plan The Research Institute of Education has already begun work on

- *methodological materials to be used in pre-primary education. This document will be provided to interested kindergartens free;*
- *methodological materials for teachers of primary school aimed to introduce language propaedeutics;*
- *methodological material assisting teachers applying language-across- primary-curriculum approach;*
- *methodological material supporting Slovak and other languages of the same linguistic group as the Czech language.*

1.2. Language learning in secondary education and training

In secondary education or training young people complete the acquisition of the essential core of skills that will serve them throughout a lifetime of language learning. Member States agree that pupils should master at least two foreign languages, with the emphasis on effective communicative ability: active skills rather than passive knowledge. 'Native speaker' fluency is not the objective, but appropriate levels of skill in reading, listening, writing and speaking in two foreign languages are required, together with intercultural competencies and the ability to learn languages whether with a teacher or alone.

Member States should provide adequate information to parents about the choice of their child's first foreign language, and the flexibility of school curricula to permit the teaching of a wider range of languages.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Framework Educational Programme requires that within the second stage of nine year ("basic") compulsory education (i.e. lower-secondary) another foreign language is introduced. The aims and objectives of both the first and second foreign languages are defined in accord with the Common European Framework of Reference.

The target level at the end of general upper-secondary education is B2 for the first foreign language and B1 for the second foreign language.

In 2005, the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education submitted a proposal for the development of Framework Educational Programmes for secondary technical and vocational schools. Before the end of 2006 about 70 samples Framework programmes will have been developed.

Target level for students of the secondary vocational schools which are completed by attaining an apprenticeship certificate (i.e. not by a school-leaving examination) has been defined as A2+ for the second foreign language and B1 for the first foreign language.

The National Plan

- *increases the number of allocated lessons for language teaching by one within the lower- secondary level;*
- *provides support for the use of the European Language Portfolio by introducing training courses for teachers working with the ELP;*
- *finances projects aimed at the support for lesser taught languages;*
- *includes in the range of languages offered by the education system, especially its primary and secondary stages, languages which are close to the Czech language: Polish and Slovak;*
- *announces a programme supporting teaching/learning the languages of neighbours (German and Polish);*
- *supports the development and publishing of methodology materials to be used in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools focused on multiculturalism, drawing on the cultures of minorities living in the Czech Republic and building it around the literature for children and young people;*
- *supports mobility in the form of exchanges of groups, classes and teaching staff;*

- *promotes active involvement of pupils, students and pedagogues in EU programmes including e-twinning;*
- *continues to provide financial support for The Label award which is considered to be a strong motivation tool. The number of projects applying for The European Label award for the innovative projects in language teaching and learning has increased. In 2004, fifteen projects were submitted (seven have been awarded. In 2005, eight projects have been awarded out of nineteen submitted, and, in 2006, five projects have been awarded out of nineteen submitted. Moreover, in 2005 six teachers (out of twenty-five nominations) have received The European Language Teacher of the Year Award and in 2006 five (out of twenty-five nominations) teachers have been awarded. The European Label awards include financial incentives provided by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the form of fixed investments to serve the purposes of language education.*
- *financially supports the development of limited edition language course books for students in vocational and technical schools (language for specific purposes);*
- *supports CLIL type of education;*
- *ensures that CLIL didactics is included in the pre-service teacher training;*

Within secondary education the level of involvement in EU programmes has increased. The number of projects (schools and pupils) involved in approved Comenius 1.2 projects has increased in the past three school years (2003/4, 2004/5, 2005/) up to 627 (166 in 2003/4; 219 in 2004/5 and 242 in 2005/6), in Comenius 1.2 up to 71(44 + 40 + 46) and in Comenius 1.3 up to 128(37+ 48 + 43). In Comenius 2.2B (language assistants) the number of people involved has increased up to 86 (24+31+31) and in Comenius 2.2C (further education courses) up to 486 (121+177+188) .

Within Lingua 1 programme, in the past three years (2004-2006), eleven projects have been approved in which Czech institutions have participated. Within Lingua 2 the same number, i.e. eleven projects with Czech participation, has been approved.

The development and piloting of school educational programmes of technical and vocational schools has been realised within the “PILOT S” project which is scheduled until November 2008. This project will be co-financed using the ESF. On 25 July 2006 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports launched piloting and verification of school programmes developed within PILOT S project. Thirty schools will start following the programme in the school year 2006/2007. Apart from 30 schools involved in this project, a number of technical and vocational schools have already developed their own school programmes, all of them stressing the significant role of language education and all of them introducing the European Language Portfolio.

The number of participants in the Leonardo da Vinci programme has also gone up. The involvement in the programme has significantly assisted to upgrading not only professional but also language and intercultural competences of young people in vocational education. Although the most frequently used languages are German and English, each year the range of working languages widens. In 2004 the following ten

languages appeared in the placement projects: (DE, EN, FR, ES, CZ, SK, IT, PL, NL, and RO). It shows that placement projects are a perfectly suitable tool for broadening linguistic diversity and upgrading professional language knowledge. Altogether around 11 150 participants from the Czech Republic have been offered the chance to enhance their language knowledge through Leonardo projects. Moreover, 11 language competences projects have offered new language teaching tools for specific professions, sectors and target groups (e.g. mechanical engineering, logistics, building sector, pharmacy...).

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

At the moment there is no higher education institution study programme leading to qualifications for CLIL, which means that it is not possible for Czech teachers to hold official qualifications stating specifically that they are entitled to teach one or more subjects in the curriculum in a language other than the Czech language. The number of schools offering CLIL is still rather limited. Shortage of CLIL qualified teachers (plus lack of serious pressure on pre-service teacher training to produce teachers specialised in CLIL) and budgetary restrictions may be high on the list of reasons. Thus, at the moment further spread of CLIL providing schools depends on initiatives of individual schools and foreign partners, often on a combination of both.

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

Administrative and legal obstacles of wider spread of CLIL have been reduced following the provisions of The Education Act of 2004, and those of the Decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, basic schools (comprising the stage of primary and lower-secondary). All types of secondary schools and tertiary professional schools can be granted with the consent to teach selected subjects in a foreign language under certain conditions, the most important being:

- *tuition /instruction in a foreign language needs to be carried out by qualified teachers;*
- *the minimum knowledge of the language of instruction should be C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference;*
- *the student (or parents if a student is under 18) needs to agree with being included in a class with teaching selected subjects in a foreign language;*
- *the introduction of teaching a subject/ subjects in a foreign language does not entitle the school to further financial resource from the state budget.*

1.3. Language learning in Higher Education

“Higher Education institutions play a key role in promoting societal and individual multilingualism. Proposals that each university implement a coherent language policy clarifying its role in promoting language learning and linguistic diversity, both amongst its learning community and in the wider locality, are to be welcomed. All students should study abroad, preferably in a foreign language, for at least one term, and should gain an accepted language qualification as part of their degree course”

Member States are invited to review training programmes at universities to ensure that they equip students in the language professions with the right skills for rapidly changing working conditions.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Due to the autonomy of higher education institutions granted by the Higher Education Act) the situation in higher education could be varied. Most higher education institutions, however, continue to organise teaching of foreign languages and set

examinations. Very few may set examinations without offering courses leading to them. Higher education institutions organise teaching of foreign languages as a follow-up of secondary school language teaching. The main focus is on teaching languages for specific purposes. Although majority of students study only one foreign language for specific purposes, the number of those studying more languages in the courses provided by higher education institutions has increased up to 18, 5%. This number does not include those who take language courses outside higher education institutions.

In co-operation with reputable language schools higher education institutions offer their student's opportunities to study for internationally recognised certificates in foreign languages.

“The Long-term Plan for Educational, Scientific, Research, Development, Artistic and Other Creative Activities of Higher Education Institutions for the years 2006-2010” published in 2005 aims at motivating higher education institutions to broaden the offer of study programmes offered in foreign languages. In 2005 altogether 914 study programmes in a foreign language have been accredited, most of them with English, but also German and Russian, as languages of instruction. Such programmes should not only enable students from abroad to study at our higher education institutions, but they should also provide Czech students with an opportunity to study the whole programme or its part in a foreign language. This priority of Long-term Plan has been reflected in the long-term plans of individual higher education institutions.

The number of double or joint degree study programmes also increases every year. It seems that higher education institutions have already overcome the initial lack of teachers (and students) with adequate language skills who could be involved in these programmes. Majority of such programmes is in English, some are in German and French.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has supported the development of students' language competences through development programmes focused on improving language skills of academic staff and students, on innovation of study programmes in the field of language education, especially language education of current and prospective teachers of both languages as well as of non-linguistic subjects. Since 2004 Czech higher education institutions can apply for funds from the European Social Fund. Projects increasing the level of language competences and supporting language skills of students and academic staff (including current and prospective teachers of higher education institutions) within lifelong education and also projects for people threatened by unemployment have been supported.

Every year the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also sends out students abroad based on bilateral agreements which contain quotas for exchange study stays and summer schools of languages. Study stays as a rule last from one to ten months. The Ministry also encourages all higher education institutions to conclude direct co-operation agreements between higher education institutions which broaden the opportunities of study stays abroad.

Participation of students in the Erasmus programme -mobility is constantly increasing. In the academic year 2003/4 altogether 3589 students participated, in 2004/5 4 178 participated. In 2005/6 4725 students participated. Data of the 2006/7 academic year are not yet available. Moreover, Czech higher education institutions have been offered participation in Erasmus Mundus Master Course. In 2006 nine applications have been approved. In 2007 also nine applications have been approved.

In 2005 only 5,8% students participated in mobility programmes, however, the Long-term Plan expects that all the students (up to 50%) interested in a mobility programme will have a chance to participate.

The offer of intensive language courses for students prior to their going on a study stay abroad increases every year, nevertheless, not all the requests of interested students could be met. Apart from English, German and French, also courses in lesser taught languages are offered (Italian, Greek, Slavonic languages etc.). Ministry provides financial support allocated from the state budget for the organisation of Erasmus Intensive Language Courses(ELIC). In 2005, 157 Czech students participated in ELIC courses abroad, 191students from abroad participated in ELIC courses in the Czech Republic.

Moreover, the National Plan encourages and provides financial incentives to teaching foreign languages for specific purposes in higher education institution programmes; For three years since 2006, each year 9 million Czech Crowns will be allocated for projects focused on the support for foreign language teaching, especially foreign languages for specific purposes, at higher education institutions.

The National Plan has also obliged the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education to design a Manual for the for the development of educational programme for tertiary professional education(post upper secondary level) with a special appendix focused on foreign languages.

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- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?.
 - c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

1.4. Adult language learning

Every adult should be encouraged to carry on learning foreign languages, and facilities should be made readily available to make this possible. Workers should have the opportunity to improve the language skills relevant to their working life. Cultural activities involving foreign music, literature or films, holidays abroad, town-twinning activities, voluntary service abroad can be promoted as opportunities for learning about other cultures and languages”

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

In 2005 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports issued a Decree on Language Schools Which are Granted the Right to Organise, Administer and Provide State Language Examinations and to Issue State Language Examination Certificates. The Decree specifies conditions for these examinations and certificates. Framework Educational Programme for these language schools has been under development. These schools are open to wide public. They offer courses predominantly for adult learners. The content of education courses in these language schools is divided into individual stages, the target skills and competences of each stage are defined in accord with the CEFR.

Apart from the above mentioned language schools numerous other existing language schools offer different courses, including courses leading to internationally acknowledged certifications. A list of the most widely recognised examinations at different CEFR levels together with brief description of the examination components has been produced in collaboration with cultural institutes (British Council, Goethe Institut, Aliance francaise, Istituto Italiano, Istituto Cervantes) and is available on the website of the Ministry: www.msmt.cz.

According to the Decree No. 322 issued in 2005, language school can also submit to the Ministry applications for one-year post upper-secondary programmes focused on foreign language learning. Provided the ministerial consent is given and the programme of the language school is accredited, fresh upper-secondary school-leavers enrolled in these courses are, for that particular year, entitled to the same benefits provided by the system of state social support and annuity insurance as regular secondary school students.

The National Plan envisages

- *production of the National Language Gateway which will enable all citizens to improve their competences in foreign languages using free e-learning language courses. The courses available will be designed for different languages and for different target levels (defined by the Common European Framework for Languages). The total of nine million Czech Crowns has been allocated to this project for the period of 2006-2008);*
- *a system of language vouchers” as an effective, transparent and very motivating instrument used to increase the demand for language courses. This programme should be financially supported by the state and co-financed by employers and relevant individuals. Total of 535 million Czech Crowns is expected to be allocated to this programme from the state budget in the period 2006-2008.*
- *Support for adult language education grant projects - within the re-qualification programmes and within further education courses organised by employers. Total of 4, 5 million has been allocated to this project for the period 2006-2008.*
- *Encouragement to use the European Language Portfolio for Adults (already developed and available).*

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

1.5. Language learners with special needs

Language learning is for everybody. Only a very small minority of people has physical, mental or other characteristics that make language learning impossible. Provision for learners with special needs of one kind or another is increasingly being made within mainstream schools and training institutions; however, such learners are still excluded from language lessons in some cases. Good practice in teaching languages to learners with special needs can be further developed and new methods and approaches need to be developed for the teaching of foreign languages to such learners

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Assistance for those with special educational needs has traditionally been provided at all schools starting at pre-primary level. The Framework Educational Programme has been supplemented by Appendix, valid as of 1st September 2005, which specifies how aims and objectives defined by the FEP should be reflected in the school education programmes and individualised if necessary, to respond to the needs of children with slight mental handicap.

- *Foreign language teaching/ learning is included in the educational programme for pupils with special educational needs. Since 2005 it has*

been part of the programme for those groups of pupils with special educational needs which had been exempted from compulsory foreign language learning before. This provision should further enhance social and economic integration of pupils with special educational needs. Until recently pupils with mild mental disorders could learn a foreign language only as a non-obligatory subject in the seventh to ninth grades of compulsory nine-year school attendance. The Supplement (Appendix) of Framework Educational Programme introduces compulsory foreign language within the educational theme “language and language communication”.

- *Newly, foreign language has been introduced as an optional or non-obligatory subject for hard- of- hearing pupils.*
- *Before 2005 pupils with severe mental disorders, with more disorders and autistic pupils were exempted from foreign language learning. The new Education Act and the Framework Education Programme offers interested pupils with prerequisites to learn elementary forms of communication, learning a foreign language based on listening and imitation.*

Active participation of pupils with special educational needs in Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programme has been encouraged. Within projects realised by means of these programmes language tools have been developed for disadvantaged groups (i.e. the deaf and the blind).

In 2006 financial resources have been allocated within the programme supporting the development and publishing of course-books and other resources for pupils with health handicap. A multimedia English course for basic school pupils with specific learning disorders has been financed and published.

Some universities offer educational opportunities, as do a large number of civic associations and publicly beneficial organisations. For instance the Language Resource Centre (LRC, of Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague caters for students interested in the Czech Sign language, British Sign Language (BSL) and American Sign Language (ASL). Any student or teacher of the Faculty of Arts may use the Centre, students and teachers from other academic institutions are welcomed as well. The LRC provides services such as audio and video programs, computer programs for self-access language studies, sign language video and computer programs. Special section of the library is dedicated to English and American literature on history and culture of Deaf Community. Section of audio books on English and American literature graded according to the level of students' progress, is especially recommended to blind students for improving their listening skills. Satellite language teaching broadcasts, materials for self-access and distance language learning and teaching, magazines, take away loans, methodical guidance for students and teachers, exhibitions , workshops and seminars are available as well.

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

1.6. Range of languages

Promoting linguistic diversity means actively encouraging the teaching and learning of the widest possible range of languages in our schools, universities, adult education centres and enterprises. Taken as a whole, the range on offer should include the smaller European languages as well as all the larger ones, regional, minority and migrant languages as well as those with 'national' status, and the languages of our major

trading partners throughout the world. The imminent enlargement of the European Union will bring with it a wealth of languages from several language families; it requires a special effort to ensure that the languages of the new Member States become more widely learned in other countries. Member States have considerable scope to take a lead in promoting the teaching and learning of a wider range of languages than at present.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The Framework Educational Programme (FEP) requires that within the first stage (i.e. primary level) of nine year compulsory education one foreign language is introduced, within the second stage (i.e. lower-secondary) another foreign language is introduced. The choice of languages (both the first FL and another FL) is wide: German, Italian, French, Spanish, Russian, but it is recommended to prefer English language as the first foreign language for the sake of continuity. If the first foreign language is not English, then the second foreign language taken up within lower-secondary level has to be English. If the first foreign language is English, the scope of second foreign languages offered is the same as for the first foreign language: German, Italian, French, Spanish, and Russian.

Moreover, in accord with the National Plan, the Development Programme (No 12846/2006-22 of 20 June 2006) has been declared to support less widely taught languages. In the context of the education system in the Czech Republic less widely taught languages are languages other than English and German. This development programme helps to provide financial and human resources necessary in order to open new classes and offer teaching less widely taught languages even if the number of students interested and enrolled is very small.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

2. BETTER LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1. The language-friendly school

It is important that schools and training institutions adopt a holistic approach to the teaching of language, which makes appropriate connections between the teaching of 'mother tongue', 'foreign' languages, the language of instruction, and the languages of migrant communities; such policies will help children to develop the full range of their communicative abilities. In this context, multilingual comprehension approaches can be of particular value because they encourage learners to become aware of similarities between languages, which is the basis for developing receptive multilingualism.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The FEP defines the content of compulsory education using a structure of nine educational themes, each theme, including the theme of "language and language communication", being defined mainly by three aspects:

- *its characteristics, i.e the FEP specifies the role and importance of the area within basic education, taking into account the need of continuity within individual stages of education (especially primary and lower -secondary stages);*
- *definition of each area, which specifies how the content of education should be focused in order to achieve the required key competences;*

- *expected outcomes of the process .*

In the Framework Educational Programme, foreign languages fall within the area “language and language communication” together with the Czech language and literature. Holistic approach to language teaching is one of the principles on which this significant education document has been built. This approach has been further strengthened by the provisions of the National Plan which encourages and supports language and cultural awareness and language across-curriculum approach both as methods targeted at pupils as well as theoretical principles included in the teacher training programmes.

The pilot stage of the Framework Educational Programme organised by the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education and the Research Institute of Education in a number of schools has shown positive changes in the process of foreign language teaching and learning. Although the piloting and verification will go on until 2008, it has already become clear that schools increasingly try to use adequate methods in order to develop communicative competences in a foreign language. Exchange programmes and increased mobility have helped to enhance pupils’ and students’ motivation.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

The implementation of the EFP has just recently started. Therefore, the experience and data gathered are not sufficient to analyse and evaluate how its principles have been adopted in practice.

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

- *Systematic inclusion of the approach into the pre- service and in-service teacher training courses.*
- *The Research Institute of Education has started to organise seminars for language teachers assisting them to develop school programmes which would include methods and approaches leading to the development and improvement of pupils’ key competences. Examples of good practice provided by some of the pilot schools have been gathered and made available as a source of inspiration for other language teachers;*
- *Methodological Gateway has been offered to foreign language teachers providing theoretical as well practical advice to foreign language teachers.*

2.2. Language teacher training

Language teachers have a crucial role to play in building a multilingual Europe. They, more than teachers of other subjects, are called upon to exemplify the European values of openness to others, tolerance of differences, and willingness to communicate. It is important that they have all had adequate experience of using the target language and understanding its associated culture. All teachers of a foreign language should have spent an extended period in a country where that language is spoken and have regular opportunities to update their training.

The skills and personal resources required to teach languages well are considerable. Initial training should equip language teachers with a basic ‘toolkit’ of practical skills and techniques, through training in the classroom; language teachers need the advice of trained mentors as well as regular opportunities to keep their language and teaching skills up to date, inter alia via e- learning and distance learning.

Language teachers may often feel isolated, unaware of developments elsewhere with the potential to improve their work; they may not have access to adequate professional support networks; it is therefore

important to facilitate contacts and effective networks between them at a regional, national and European level.

In this field, Member States have a crucial role to play in ensuring that all teachers of a foreign language have:

- appropriate initial training including practical training in the pedagogy of foreign languages, and experience of living in a country whose language they teach, and
- regular paid access to in-service training.

Member States will recall that the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 invited them to encourage future language teachers to take advantage of relevant European programmes to carry out part of their studies in a country or region of a country where the language which they will teach later is the official language.

Member States are invited to review their current arrangements for foreign language teacher training in the light of the findings of the study 'European Profile for Language Teacher Education';¹

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

In order to acquire full teaching qualifications for teaching of a foreign language in Czech schools it is necessary to complete a study programme leading to the degree in teaching of the language in question at a university, either at faculties of education (teacher training faculties) or faculties of arts. The course of study lasts four to five years. Teacher training in the Czech Republic means always training in two subjects. A prospective teacher must acquire qualifications in teaching of two subjects, the combination of which is selected from the faculty offer. The two subjects can also be two foreign languages. There is a formal difference among the teaching qualifications (and aptitude) for teaching of a foreign language at primary school level, at lower-secondary level and at upper-secondary level (both general and technical/professional). The curricular content of initial teacher training programmes is defined by individual relevant faculty departments. Nevertheless, all the programmes have to be accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Teaching practice has always been part of pre-service teacher training / study programmes, the minimum usually being four weeks of practical teaching. The students/ trainees attend classes of experienced practitioners (sitting in) and teach their first classes under the supervision of experienced teachers/ teacher trainers. Their preparation for the lesson, the lesson itself, analysis of the procedures used and the mistakes made are analysed. The number of hours of sitting in (observed lessons) and teaching practice (the student teaches while being observed) varies according to individual faculties.

Future language teachers increasingly participate in the European programmes enabling them to carry out part of their studies in the country of the target language. Moreover, based on bilateral agreements between ministries of education in the relevant countries, students - future language teachers and their trainers have an opportunity to spend part of their studies in the country where the target language is spoken. Such study stays abroad can last from one to ten months. Every year most countries of the target language offer these students places on summer schools of languages. The Ministry also encourages all higher education institutions, i.e. including those with teacher training faculties, to conclude direct co-operation agreements between higher education institutions which broaden the opportunities of

¹ European Profile for Language Teacher Education – A Frame of Reference
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/doc/profile_en.pdf

study stays abroad in the countries where the language which students will teach later is the official language.

In-service training of teachers is provided free of charge in order to familiarise teachers with new policy developments (Framework Educational Programme) and new instruments (such as CEF, European Language Portfolio), to assist them to use new instruments (e.g. seminars on the use of ELP) and develop individualised policy documents (e.g. school educational programmes). The National Institute for Further Education organises courses for language teachers. The number of participants increases every year: In 2004 : 125 language teachers, in 2005: 2041 teachers and in the first half of 2006 : 1748 teachers were involved in language courses. It is expected that in the second half of 2006, 1531 teachers will participate.

Through the membership of the Czech Republic in the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria, each year language teachers, especially those with multiplying capacity, are offered places on workshops organised by the ECML within individual projects which deal with a variety of aspects of language education. ECML activities give teachers a chance to work in international environment, improve their expertise in language teaching, share opinions and experiences, start networking and, disseminate the newly gained knowledge, skills and experience among other teachers in the Czech Republic. Organising bodies of the schools are encouraged to recognise participation in these workshops as a form of further education.

Each year, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports provides grants to associations of foreign language teachers in order to support their initiatives aimed at relevant groups of teachers (e.g. newsletter, conferences, seminars etc.).

In addition to what has been mentioned, the recently approved National Plan calls for the increase and also financially supports

- *foreign language didactics as a field of science to be considered in the accreditation processes;*
- *study stays abroad of the students of pre-service language teacher training. Further resources shall be allocated (300 million Czech Crowns in 2006-2008);*
- *enhancement of “ language preparation” of teachers of non-linguistic subjects in order to facilitate their involvement in the CLIL type of education and also international co-operation and exchange programmes;*

Based on the National Plan specific courses of further education have been developed and will start in September 2006:

- *“MEJA” programme (methodology and language courses) - expected number of participants : 2325;*
- *“Languages through Play” programme for pre-primary school teachers – expected number of participants: 1320;*
- *the use of “ The European Language Portfolio” seminars for interested teachers;*

- *further education/seminars for teacher trainers (expected number of participants : 90.*
- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- *Reluctance of higher education institutions to be more flexible as far as substantial changes in their study programmes are concerned.*
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

Raising awareness and use of EU programmes and, recently also the awareness of EEA grants among the target population.

Through its membership in the European Centre of Modern Languages (ECML) the Czech Republic follow the progress of the project “European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages” and, once the product is available, encourage higher education institutions to implement it with the aim to initiate improvements (and compatibility) in the area of content and structure of language teacher training courses.

2.3. Supply of language teachers

Some Member States face shortages of adequately-qualified language teachers; these may be general shortages or may relate to certain languages or certain types of education or training; these shortages need to be addressed and sustainable solutions found. More can be done to exchange teachers between Member States; such teachers may work as teachers of their mother tongue, teachers of another language or as teachers of another subject through their mother tongue. In linguistic border areas there is particular scope for initiatives targeting neighbouring languages in this field.

Member States have been recommended² to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the mobility of teachers and their progress needs to be monitored

In this field, Member States have a particular responsibility to remove any remaining administrative or legal barriers to the employment of teachers of a foreign language from other Member States.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

Apart from the initiatives which have been applied over the past decade and which have consisted mainly in measures securing more financial resources in order to attract fresh teacher training courses graduates to enter the foreign language teaching profession and which would also sufficiently motivate the existing language teachers to remain in their profession (e.g. increase in salary, further education opportunities, better availability of resources, better technical equipment of schools, especially with ICT and the access to the Internet, support for the participation in EU programmes, motivating incentives connected with the European Label Award (financed by the Ministry) etc., new measures have been adopted since 2004 :

National project of system of courses in language and didactics “Janua Linguarum” launched in September 2005 by the Ministry and the National Institute for Further Education which is aimed to support and improve language competences of teachers. Participants involved in the project are:

² by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Mobility ... for Students, Persons Undergoing Training, Volunteers, Teachers and Trainers (2001/613/EC)

- *qualified teachers with good language skills but without qualifications for language teaching - the main objective is to increase the number of language teachers ;*
- *qualified language teachers - the main objective is to improve their didactic skills;*
- *non-linguistic subject teachers - the main objective is to provide them with sufficient language skills which would enhance their chances to actively participate in EU programmes.*

b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

The main obstacle to the employment of more foreign language teachers from other European countries is the salary which, although reasonably sufficient to cover teachers' expenses while living in the Czech Republic, is rather low when converted into Euros.

A minor obstacle to mobility could be the fact that foreign teachers are required to approach relevant authorities in order to find out whether it is necessary to have their degrees nostrified (i.e. recognised). With some countries agreements of recognition have been concluded, which means the process of nostrification is not necessary.

All foreign teachers supplied by foreign partners (based on international agreements) and working for schools with CLIL provision which have been established by a bilateral agreement between the Ministry and a foreign partner hold qualifications required for teaching positions in their respective countries and no nostrification is necessary.

c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

Although nostrification is not a very lengthy process, hopefully, the Bologna process will further simplify the process of foreign language teachers' recruitment.

2.4. Training teachers of other subjects

Most pupils and trainees could study at least some of their curriculum through the medium of a foreign language. Many more members of the teaching profession should in future be able to teach their subject(s) through at least one foreign language; to this end, trainee teachers should study language(s) alongside their area of specialisation and undertake a part of their teaching studies abroad.

a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The National Plan:

- *encourages higher education institutions to introduce study programmes which include the subject of foreign language into bachelor's study programmes preparing teachers of non-linguistic subjects, thus increasing their opportunities to be involved in exchanges and other international programmes of schools;*
- *encourages higher education institutions to develop teacher training study programmes preparing teachers of non- linguistic subjects for teaching other than language subjects through a foreign language (CLIL types of education). Resources shall be allocated to support development of such programmes (30 million Czech Crowns in 2006-200). Legal provisions already exist as according to the provisions of The Education Act of 2004, and also according to the Decree of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, basic schools*

(comprising the stage of primary and lower- secondary), all types of secondary schools and tertiary professional schools can be granted with the consent to teach selected subjects. See details under 1.2.

One of the aims of the “Janua Linguarum” project developed by the Ministry and organised by the National Institute for Further Education (see under 2.3) is to train qualified teachers with good language skills but without qualifications for language teaching so that they could teach non-linguistic subjects through foreign language.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

2.5. Testing language skills

The Common Reference Scales of the Council of Europe’s Common European Framework of Reference for Language³ provide a good basis for schemes to describe individuals’ language skills in an objective, practical, transparent and portable manner. Effective mechanisms are needed to regulate the use of these scales by examining bodies. Teachers and others involved in testing language skills need adequate training in the practical application of the Framework. European networks of relevant professionals could do much to help share good practice in this field.

The European Language Portfolio⁴ can help people to value, and make the most of, all their language skills, howsoever acquired, and to carry on learning languages by themselves

In this respect, Member States were invited by the Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 to set up systems of validation of competence in language knowledge based on the Common European Framework of reference for languages developed by the Council of Europe, and to stimulate European cooperation in order to promote transparency of qualifications and quality assurance of language learning.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The Czech Republic was one of the countries in which CEF was piloted before 2001. CEF was translated into Czech as early as in 2001. This is why it has been possible to take into account its principles in all the major relevant documents developed since 2000, such as the Framework Educational Programmes and also the System of upper-secondary school-leaving examination - MATURITA.

Transparent national certification systems of language skills at the end of upper-secondary schools (“Maturita”), which is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), has been widely piloted and should be introduced within three years. In the future, similar evaluation of language skills is foreseen at the end of the second stage of compulsory education (i.e. of pupils aged 15).

The Ministry issued a Decree encouraging schools to use the European Language Portfolio- an instrument working with the CEF principles. Four ELPs have been developed and used: for pupils up to the age of 11, pupils aged 11-15, ELP for upper- secondary schools and ELP for adults. In order to increase awareness of

³ http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/Common_Framework_of_Reference/default.asp

⁴ [http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/welcome.html](http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/welcome.html)

ELP's existence and encourage the use of ELP the Ministry has bought and sent copies of ELPs to schools which showed interest. Seminars on the use of ELP for teachers and teacher trainers have been run since 2001 and supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (see also under 2.2).

The Czech Republic is actively involved in the preparatory work for the implementation and development of the European indicator of language competence.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

3. BUILDING A LANGUAGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

3.1. An inclusive approach to linguistic diversity

National and regional authorities are encouraged to give special attention to measures to assist those language communities whose number of native speakers is in decline from generation to generation, in line with the principles of the European Charter on Regional and Minority languages.

Member States are encouraged to give special attention to measures to assist language communities whose number of native speakers is in decline from generation to generation, in line with the principles of the European Charter on Regional and Minority languages.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?

The Education Act of 2004 states that a municipality, a region or the Ministry shall ensure education for members of national minorities in the language of the relevant minority at nursery, "basic" (primary and lower-secondary) and secondary schools. Should at least eight children claim to be members of a national minority, a class of the relevant grade of nursery school may be set up; should at least ten pupils claim to be members of a national minority, a class of the relevant grade of basic school may be set up. A nursery school or basic school with the language of the national minority may be established provided that all classes have on average at least twelve pupils.

Should at least twelve pupils claim to be members of a national minority, a class of the relevant grade of upper-secondary school may be set up; an upper-secondary school with the language of the national minority as the language of instruction may be established provided that all classes have on average at least fifteen pupils who claim to be members of the national minority.

In organising education in the language of a national minority, municipalities, regions or the Ministry take into account the accessibility of this education. Education in the language of a national minority may be also organised by a union of municipalities, or, a municipality and a region may mutually agree on the manner of organisation, including funding, of such education.

If conditions mentioned above are not satisfied a head teacher with the consent of the founder may specify in the School Educational Programme subjects or their parts which may be taught bilingually, both in the Czech language and the language of the relevant national minority.

Schools with instruction in the language of the relevant national minority issue bilingual documents: school reports, apprenticeship certificates, and diplomas on completion of education, both in the Czech language and in the language of instruction.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

3.2. Building language-friendly communities

Every community in Europe can become more language-friendly by making better use of opportunities to hear and see other languages and cultures, thereby helping to improve language awareness and learning. It is in the interest of the Union to capitalise on the skills and experiences of its many bi- and tri-lingual citizens, and temporary residents such as Erasmus students; monolingual citizens have much to learn from them; public authorities can make better use of their skills in schools, adult education centres, cultural establishments and workplaces.

Tourism projects, cross-border projects and town twinning schemes can form the nuclei of local language learning schemes, enabling citizens to learn the language(s) of their neighbours or twin town(s), and offering an incentive to do so.

- a) What tangible progress (if any) was done in this field since 2004?

The number of activities within the European Day of Languages increases every year. So does the number of projects applying for the European Label Award. See more details under 1.2.

Within Comenius and Leonardo da Vinci programme beneficiaries of development projects (pilot and language competences projects) include university teachers, students, apprentices and users with specific needs. The partnerships in the projects range from four to twelve countries and their outcomes are as a rule available in languages of all the partners.

Four reference levels for the Czech as a foreign language (based on CEFR) have been developed upon the initiative and using the grant of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Levels A1, A2 and B2 are now available to be downloaded from the website, B1/Threshold level is available only in print. Work on the development of study programmes, course-books, tests etc, which would reflect the need for modern Czech language teaching/ learning methods, materials and opportunities, has already started. The existing reference levels for Czech as a foreign language and other materials which have been based on the levels, currently assist tremendously the government integration policy in their efforts to develop a strategy of creating language and culturally friendly environment for the increasing number of foreigners, especially those applying for long-term residence permit or even citizenship.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this statement have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

3.3. Improving supply and take-up of language learning

It is essential to improve the take-up of language learning opportunities by continuous activities to raise awareness of the benefits of language learning, and by bringing language resources closer to the people

who need them. The Council of Europe's initiative the European Day of Languages⁵ can be valuable in motivating people to learn foreign languages.

European Union initiatives such as the European Languages Label⁶ also have a key role in this by highlighting local, regional, or national projects that have found creative ways to improve the quality of language teaching.

The provision of language learning facilities and courses is the responsibility of local, regional and national authorities. Both within and outside formal systems there is still considerable unmet demand not only for language lessons but also for information and advice on language learning.

Appropriate structures are required to motivate people of all ages to learn languages, to offer guidance about how to start, and to provide easy access to a variety of different language learning activities. This is likely to require some investment in new provision, though there is also much to gain by making better use of existing language learning resources and staff in schools and universities, libraries, local learning networks and adult education centres.

- a) What concrete actions (if any) have been accomplished in this field since 2004?
- ***For the European Day of Languages and The European Label award as strong motivation tools see under 1.2.***
 - ***For the National Language Gateway and "language vouchers" scheme see under 1.4***
 - ***For the support for the spread of the European Language Portfolio see under 2.5***
 - ***Information on current initiatives is being regularly updated and put on the Internet – website of the Ministry, including translations of the Council of Europe's brochure "How you can learn languages" (www.msmt.cz). Survey of the commonest examinations in foreign languages is available on the same website as well.***
- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?
- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

4. OVERALL NATIONAL LANGUAGE STRATEGY

Member States are invited to describe how the Action Plan fitted into their national language policies

- a) How has the follow-up of the Action Plan been coordinated at national level?

The National Plan for languages has been developed at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports together with its Action Plan for the years 2005-2008. Fifteen-member working group has been appointed to organise the fulfilment of the tasks set by the NP. Members of the working group represent relevant departments of the Ministry and institutions established by the Ministry, such as the National Institute for Further Education; the Research Institute of Education, the Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Counselling, the Institute for Information on Education, the National Institute of Technical and Vocational Education.

⁵ 26 September each year; see http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Cooperation/education/Languages/Language_Policy/European_Day_of_Languages/default.asp

⁶ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/language/label/index.cfm>

Tasks are broken down into three types of activities according to their priority. Responsible department/ departments or institution are assigned to each task. Target dates for completing each task are set, potential funding mechanisms are defined.

- b) Has it been included in national policy initiatives?

On 21 December 2005, The National Plan for Foreign Language Education (NP) was approved by the Government (No. 1660/2005).

- c) Was there a coordination group / committee?

In 2005 fifteen-member working group was established – see above.

Member States may provide information on other relevant national initiatives for languages which do not fit into the framework of the Action Plan

- a) Were there any language initiatives and priorities which were either planned or carried out and which did not fit into the framework of the Action Plan?

Member States are invited to establish national plans to give structure, coherence and direction to actions to promote multilingualism, including increasing the use and presence of a variety of languages in daily life⁷

- a) What initial steps have been taken on this issue?

The National Plan is currently being implemented.

- b) What obstacles to the implementation of this recommendation have been identified?

- c) What are the proposed initiatives to overcome these obstacles?

⁷ These plans should be based upon Integrated Guideline N° 23 and form part of the national plans that Member States are producing in the context of the Lisbon Action Plan for growth and jobs. (http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/integrated_guidelines_en.pdf)